



**Mike Kreidler
Washington State
Insurance
Commissioner**

Fact Sheet: **WASHINGTON'S** **SHIBA HELPLINE**

Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) HelpLine is a statewide network of trained volunteers who educate, assist and advocate for consumers about their rights and options regarding health insurance, so they can make informed choices.

The free program -- sponsored by Washington State Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler's Office -- has won national acclaim and serves as a model for other states.

The Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) HelpLine is a special service of the Insurance Commissioner's Office that provides free health-insurance education, assistance and advocacy for all Washington residents, including the disabled, in hundreds of communities around the state.

SHIBA HelpLine volunteers and staff assist consumers with choices and issues involving private health insurance as well as many government programs (Medicare, Medicaid, Basic Health, Children's Health Insurance Program, and the Washington State Health Insurance Pool). SHIBA HelpLine volunteers also are experts in Medigap coverage, employment-related health benefits, managed care, long-term care insurance, medical billings and fraud/abuse questions.

For the number of the SHIBA HelpLine office nearest you, call **1-800-397-4422**.

Today, approximately 350 SHIBA HelpLine volunteers are active in more than 100 Washington communities. The SHIBA HelpLine program also publishes a number of publications dealing with health insurance issues. These materials also are available from local volunteer counselors; by request via the toll-free referral line; or on the Internet.

Other SHIBA HelpLine information is posted on the Insurance Commissioner's Web page on the Internet: <http://www.insurance.wa.gov>

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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